

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

When someone greatly disappoints you, do you typically react aggressively or passively?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. **Ephesians 2:1-3 NLT**

With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. **Ephesians 4:17–32 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Rather than becoming bitter when people disappoint, what can you focus on today?

Who is our source of strength and peace?

Are you bringing sorrow to God's Holy Spirit? What is your next step?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for loving and forgiving me despite my many sins. Extend your grace and mercy and compassion through me to others who, like me, need it but do not deserve it!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most scared you ever remember being?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.

You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling."

No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain. Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire. **Hebrews 12:14–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Review the urgency of the initial warnings: work at...look after...watch out...make sure...

Review the times this Scripture pointed out something amazing with "you have come..."

What are you willing to risk to follow Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for making a way for us to be freely forgiven rather than to be punished with deserved vengeance. Teach me to worship you with holy fear and awe out of gratefulness!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

In what area of your life do you need to manage your expectations more effectively?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.

For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil."

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. **1 Peter 3:8–18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

"Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing." Which situation does this bring to mind? What is your next step?

In a broken world, goodness is often suspect and sometimes people suffer for doing right. What do we learn that God does for those who experience this?

What does worshipping Christ as the Lord of your life protect you from? What does it not protect you from?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for entering into the world and suffering with us and for us. Teach me to worship you as Lord of my life so that when I have joy, it is in you, and when I have difficulty, I am strengthened by you.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What are you worried about today?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going." "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you." **John 14:1-17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Jesus told his closest followers "Don't let your hearts be troubled" hours before he would be crucified. His encouragement was instead to trust God the Father and also in himself. How can you reformat your worries and surrender in trust to God and Jesus?

Have you considered that your greatest questions about what God the Father is like are answered in what Jesus is like—who he is, what he said, and what he did?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you are full of grace and truth. You have prepared a place for me to be with you for eternity. Thank you for showing us the Father. Love the world through me today!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you hear the word "sanctuary," what comes to mind?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

The LORD is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid? The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble? When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident.

The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple. For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the LORD with music.

Hear me as I pray, O LORD. Be merciful and answer me! My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "LORD, I am coming." Do not turn your back on me. Do not reject your servant in anger. You have always been my helper. Don't leave me now; don't abandon me, O God of my salvation! Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.

Teach me how to live, O LORD. Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me. Do not let me fall into their hands. For they accuse me of things I've never done; with every breath they threaten me with violence. Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living. Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD. **Psalm 27:1-14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What made King David confident that he would see the Lord's goodness while he was "here in the land of the living"? How do you see God's goodness in your life?

Do you trust God in this way? Why or why not? What would help you trust God more?

King David encouraged his readers to "wait patiently for the Lord." What are you waiting for that you need to show trust and patience in God? How do you physically, mentally, and emotionally "wait patiently for the Lord"?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Hear me as I pray, O Lord! Be merciful and answer me! My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming." Do not turn your back on me. Do not reject your servant in anger. You have always been my helper. Don't leave me now; don't abandon me, O God of my salvation!